

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization**  
**Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes**  
**August 9, 2023**  
**Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers**  
**800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

**Commission Members Present:**

Nick Ousky	Vadnais Heights (VH) (Alternate)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)

**Absent:** Susan Miller (NO)

**Others in attendance:** Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss, Dawn Tanner (VLAWMO staff), Jim Hauth (City of Vadnais Heights), Ed Shapland (CAC), Julia Hupperts (NOHOA)

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Tessier called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the August 9, 2023 TEC agenda Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes (July 12, 2023)**

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

**A. Financial Report for August and Authorization for Payment**

Administrator Belfiori introduced Jim Hauth as the new City of Vadnais Heights Public Works Director.

Administrator Belfiori outlined the financial report as included in the August TEC packet and stated the financial report was revised to include updated insurance information.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve the August financial report and authorize payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**B. August TEC Report to Board**

Administrator Belfiori outlined the August TEC Report to the Board. Notable items included continuing efforts on Oak Knoll Pond spent lime demonstration project, the

Biochar 319 project is closing out, and staff are preparing for public ditch maintenance and debris clearing this fall. Work on updating the VLAWMO website is also continuing.

It was moved by Chair Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve the August TEC report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## V. Programs

### A. LL1 2023-05 Swanson Shoreline

Sampedro described the LL1 application consisting of two landowners on the south side of Gilfillan Lake interested in completing a shoreline restoration. Gilfillan lake is impaired for nutrients and the TMDL's implementation plan recommends at least 75% of the shoreline to consist of native vegetation. This project would help achieve that goal. The existing shoreline is a failing, concrete retaining wall that risks bank collapse behind the wall. Existing turfgrass adds to the risk of collapse. The proposal is to remove the wall, regrade the slope, introduce native vegetation to the shoreline and an upstream buffer. Two bids were received for the project, staff recommended approval for the application at 50% up to \$5,000.

Commissioner Ousky asked about why a concrete barrier was installed to begin with. Sampedro stated she wasn't quite sure but presumed it was from an assumption that it would be a permanent bank protection, or potentially striving to gain additional yard space.

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve LL1 2023-05 Swanson Shoreline. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

### B. Outreach updates: MN Water Steward Capstone, groundwater conservation

Voss discussed Minnesota Water Steward Megan Sigmon-Olsen's Night to Unite event. He stated the event went well, but Megan wasn't able to provide pictures from her capstone project tour due to getting rained out. Voss noted that her project communication campaign was successful. Voss also provided an update on the recent communication on the groundwater conservation campaign including the work supported by White Bear Township and the City of Vadnais Heights.

### C. VLAWMO 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conservation Celebration August 24<sup>th</sup>

Voss provided a reminder to the TEC on the upcoming VLAWMO 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary open house event. He also noted that at 3:30pm there will a short celebration of the retirement of Stephanie McNamara for her 30 years as VLAWMO Administrator. Voss noted that the TEC should RSVP if they have not already.

### D. Update on 2024 VLAWMO budget

Administrator Belfiori described the 2024 budget that was approved by the Board. As approved, the budgeted expenditures for 2024 will be \$1,970,811. To pay these expenditures the projected income within the approved budget for 2024 is made up of: 1)

\$1,643,311 from the VLAWMO Stormwater Utility fee and fund balance carry over funds from 2023 and 2) up to \$327,500 in loans, grants and partnership funds. Grants income includes MPCA 319 grant income /partnership for proposed Wilkinson Lk. deep water wetland BMP, and BWSR grant income for watershed-based implementation funding program. These outside funding revenue grant amounts are anticipated to be revised based on project board action and project timing constraints and/or other variables.

A summary of some of the key 2024 approved Budget project highlights include (but not limited to):

1. Continued implementation of the Wilkinson Lake deep water wetland BMP,
2. Wilkinson /Tamarack Lake TMDL implementation/ possible alum project,
3. Pleasant Lake management including carp management, possible AIS management (per discussions with MN Dept of Health), and water quality projects,
4. Implementation of proposed resiliency study in East Vadnais Lake subwatershed,
5. Public ditch ongoing ditch maintenance, inspection, and technical work & partnership
6. BWSR Watershed Based Fund grant implementation – cost-share program partnership with member communities including City street reconstruction projects in the City of Vadnais Heights and City of White Bear Lake;
7. Completion of the Spent Lime Demonstration Project at Oak Knoll Pond (construction schedule?),
8. Development of the VLAWMO 10 year watershed management plan,
9. Results of proposed feasibility study of possible water reuse project in Polar Park

## **VI. Projects**

### **A. Update on Wilkinson deep-water wetland restoration project bid process**

Tanner stated that 13 bids were received. Houston Engineering is reviewing the bids with staff to be presented at the August regular Board meeting. VLAWMO staff will be initiating eagle nest monitoring late summer/early fall and that monitoring will continue during the project construction with check-ins after construction has been completed.

### **B. Wilkinson deep-water wetland project pre-construction remote-camera survey**

Tanner described this effort as a comparison between pre, during, and post construction of the deep-water wetland project. Students from the U of M Community-Engaged Learning program assisted in setting up the remote cameras this spring. She highlighted juvenile eagles have been documented on the remote camera footage.

### **C. Gilfillan aquatic vegetation survey completed**

Tanner completed an aquatic vegetation survey with Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD). Tanner noted that Gilfillan has many aquatic plants that typically indicate a healthy lake. However, Gilfillan is impaired for nutrients. This provides useful information to track possible changes over time.

### **D. SEH biochar analysis and next 319 grant round**

Tanner presented that VLAWMO staff met with SEH in June and July to prepare for upcoming 319 grant administration. SEH is working to complete a task order that includes providing load-reduction results for the biochar filter and Lambert meander. *E. coli* storm samples are being collected by VLAWMO staff and analyzed in the lab by our partners at

SPRWS. Phosphorus and TSS reductions collected by VLAWMO staff during 2022 are being analyzed for the meander. Results of SEH's analysis will be provided to the MPCA as part of the grant close-out for that project.

In anticipation for the next grant round in the 319 small priority watershed program with MPCA, VLAWMO staff met with SEH engineers to work on a task order to investigate possible projects to continue working toward improvement of Wilkinson Lake. Results of this work and other potential project investigations that are underway will be provided to the TEC for consideration as early feasibilities are evaluated and optimal projects are identified. VLAWMO will provide a project proposal to the MPCA in 2025. Developing a plan at this time will prepare us for the next grant-funded project.

**I. Commissioner Reports**

None

**II. NOHOA**

Julia Hupperts shared NOHOA is planning an effort to promote VLAWMO cost-share programs for raingardens and shoreline restorations to residents. Julie expressed gratitude on behalf of NOHOA for VLAWMO's collaboration and partnership.

**III. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division**

None

**IV. St. Paul Regional Water Services**

None

**V. Public Comment**

None

**VI. Next Meetings:**

Next TEC meeting September 13<sup>th</sup>, Next BOD meeting August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.